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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF TRAINING

SUBJECT: A Program for the Establishment of a Career Corps in CIA

REFERENCE: Director of Training memorandum dated 7 August 1951,
transmitting a Proposal to Establish and Implement a
Career Corps Program in CIA

O/NE comments on subject proposal follow. In transmitting these comments we could point out that we have deliberately stressed the to us objectionable features of your proposals. We stand ready to help you in any way we can.

1. General.

a. The report is an important, commendable and valuable contribution to a systematic approach to the personnel problems of the agency. However, three separate though related problems have been grouped somewhat confusingly under one heading. These appear to be: (a) a proposal for recruitment procedures; (b) a proposal for an agency-wide career management program; and (c) a proposal for a elite "career corps". It is not clear from the report whether there is to be a separate, smaller elite "career corps" within the larger career management program, or whether the career corps is gradually to be expanded to cover all professional personnel of certain grades. We therefore suggest a redrafting of the proposal to clearly separate these three aspects. We believe, in general, that the proposed recruiting procedures are excellent and could be implemented. We also favor an agency-wide career management program. We are opposed, however, to the creation of a small elite "career corps".

b. Moreover, the proposal seems overly ambitious and comprehensive in many respects. There is, in our opinion, too much emphasis on over elaborate testing techniques, schools, etc. The program seems to reflect more familiarity with personnel administration than with substantive intelligence needs.

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Career Corps
Training

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2. Recruitment.

a. We concur in the proposals made for the recruitment of professional trainees.

b. One factor making it difficult to review the proposal in terms of the magnitude of the required effort is the lack of any estimate of our annual requirement for new personnel. Assuming moderate expansion and normal turnover, we could note that it is important to gear the publicity given the program in the various colleges with the number of vacancies likely to be available. There is some danger in arousing interest and hopes in many students if the intake is going to be restricted to a few.

c. In listing the most popular colleges you have not exhausted the list of schools from which the agency could obtain students with special and needed qualifications. Furthermore, your list of schools probably should be reconsidered on the ground that it is not nationally representative.

d. The part to be played by women professional employees ought to be carefully reviewed.

e. Insofar as this involves an outlay of CIA funds, we believe the emphasis should be shifted from pre-selection training to post-selection training. It is frequently wasteful and expensive to spend funds on people who may not actually join the agency. Where training is given selectees, we would recommend that they be required to obligate themselves either to serve the agency for a given period or to reimburse the agency for outlays made on their behalf.

f. We would caution against selection on the basis of the breakdown of the group of trainees set forth in Appendix A (p. 19). The combination of qualifications to stress seems to us to be: good brain, imagination, and good training.

g. It is important that university contacts be made to feel that they are members of the "club", with full awareness of security requirements and restrictions, and adequately remunerated.

3. Career Management.

a. O/NE concurs in the proposal for the inauguration of a career management program and believes that it should be implemented at once. This, particularly in the sense that efforts are to be made to widen the experience of CIA personnel, to increase the possibilities for gaining experience in the field and for advanced education, to the end that a competent individual can advance to positions of greater responsibility within the agency.

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b. We would question the extensive use of testing techniques to determine the rotation plan for an individual once he has been with CIA for some time and favor the more direct method of selection on the basis of a review of individual performance. We have been particularly impressed by the varied backgrounds and personalities of people successful in intelligence work.

c. We have further reservations about the training program. Can it be demonstrated that we are justified in giving every trainee twelve weeks of Russian language? In the mixture of grammar and graduate school proposed are there in fact certain "fundamentals of intelligence" that can be imparted?

d. The appraisal system and rating forms proposed raise all the old questions about employee ratings. Dozens of systems have been devised, but they all are weak because rating is a subjective affair. These schemes work fairly well where you have measurable work loads, but in an agency like CIA, you have numerous supervisors rating on non-measurable qualities.

e. We consider the division made between the generalists and the specialists as somewhat arbitrary and, in any case, a distinction which should not be made too early in the career of the intelligence officer. We consider the distinction as perhaps valid for some fields, such as the scientific field. By and large, however, intelligence work is a mixture. We feel that often the thing which a generalist needs more is an insight into the job of the specialist, or even perhaps some intensive specialist training. By the same token, the specialist who knows all the trees, ought to know what the woods look like.

f. The distinction between generalist and specialist, if any, we believe will come about not as a result of arbitrary designation or election but as a result of individual expression through normal development processes and reaction to training. The result of the evolutionary process of acquiring more experience in intelligence will naturally lead to the selection of the individual to positions for which he is qualified, be they positions requiring specialization or general background and experience. The main contribution of career management lies in making it possible for individuals to prepare themselves and to make available opportunities for those who have in fact prepared.

g. We would question the over-elaboration of training schools in the upper brackets. We consider it wholly inadvisable to set up a CIA school at the National Intelligence level, and fail to see what useful purpose this might serve. In our view, an attempt to do this would result either in duplicating the work of the National War College and established civilian institutions, or

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in having a second-rate curriculum of questionable value. At this level a year of on-the-job-training would be much more valuable than a year spent in a super-intelligence school.

4. Career Corps.

a. We consider it inadvisable to set up a "career corps" if this means the formation of a small elite corps. Employment in CIA should be a career, in general, but the creation of an elite corps within the agency would also create a morale problem among employees not in the "club". It would pile up personnel problems for the future as well, as the Foreign Service has recently found.

b. If it is envisaged that most employees would initially or eventually be in the corps, then there is no need to establish a special corps. You would simply be applying a collective name to the total of CIA employees.

c. If it is decided nevertheless that there is to be a career corps, it should be a relatively small and elite group (5 - 10% of total agency personnel). We concur that such a group should be limited to those selected from employees who have been with CIA at least 2 years. Such a program should be handled quietly rather than publicized so as to minimize the adverse morale effects on those not included. Moreover, in view of the past lack of a uniform recruiting and promotion policy within the agency, we seriously question whether there should be arbitrary grade and age limitations on the candidates to be selected.

5. Recommendations.

a. That the general proposals affecting agency recruitment policies be adopted and vigorously implemented.

b. That the proposals affecting the establishment of a career management program be adopted and implemented as soon as practicable, details to be reviewed in the light of comments received and experience in operation. In the implementation of training proposals, emphasis shall be placed on a mixture of training through rotation and schooling outside the agency.

c. That the specific proposal for the creation of a super-intelligence school be rejected.

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d. That the proposal to establish a career corps per se be reconsidered at a later date in the light of the progress made with the career management program emerging from the present effort.

FOR THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



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